



November 4, 2009

**Welcome to my weekly email update - a brief summary of some of the more notable events from Washington, DC and the U.S. Senate during the last seven days. I hope you'll find this useful and informative.**

**If you would like real-time news and views of what is going on in Washington, follow me on Twitter. Visit [http://www.twitter.com/George\\_LeMieux](http://www.twitter.com/George_LeMieux) to follow my updates.**

## **TARGETING HEALTH CARE FRAUD**

Last week, I introduced my first piece of legislation in the U.S. Senate, the Prevent Health Care Fraud Act. This bill aims to prevent the loss of billions of dollars due to health care waste, fraud, and abuse. This is money that could be otherwise used to care for our citizens. Estimates are that we lose \$60 billion a year, but some estimates have the losses as high as \$226 billion.

My proposal will create a Chief Health Care Fraud Prevention Office - a person within the Department of Health and Human Services whose sole job will be to prevent fraud. My bill will also require the government to implement proven technologies to red-flag questionable Medicare and Medicaid charges. This is the same technology used by credit card companies to keep fraudulent charges to less than seven cents for every \$100 charged. By comparison, one out of every seven dollars spent is lost to health care



fraud. Finally, the bill requires the government to conduct background checks on all new and current health service providers who do business with the federal government. Before we pay claims, we ought to know who we're dealing with. These are common sense solutions that I am hopeful will be approved by Congress and signed into law.

## **LEMIEUX TO PRESIDENT OBAMA: MCCHRYSTAL STRATEGY IS SOUND**

Last week, I sent a letter to President Obama to share my perspective of what I learned while I was in Afghanistan.

I told the president that after my meetings with General Stanley McChrystal and Ambassador Karl Eikenberry, it is my assessment that a two-pronged approach is necessary to achieve our goals - continue eliminating the enemy, while protecting the Afghan citizens.



Fighting the enemy in one city, village or region, and then moving on to another area of conflict has allowed the Taliban to reassert their presence in our absence. An effective counter insurgency effort will allow our troops to secure, clear, and hold a region until such time as the Afghan army and police can secure the area on their own. This should block the Taliban's efforts to reassert control and provide a base of terrorism. Because ongoing U.S. efforts to train the Afghan Army are going well, this strategy shift will allow the national government the time it needs to provide security to the Afghan people, further hastening our ability to bring U.S. troops home.

It is my hope President Obama will make his decision on troop levels and support in Afghanistan soon. We need enough manpower to return security to Afghanistan in order to prevent it from becoming a training ground for future terrorist attacks against our homeland. Given what is at stake, this is the strategy we must pursue as a nation, along with securing as much support as possible from our NATO partners. We should not continue to put our young men and women in the military in harm's way, if we do not have a strategy to succeed.



## **JACKSONVILLE AIR NATIONAL GUARD A FINALIST**

## FOR JOINT STRIKE FIGHTER

Last week, we learned that the Jacksonville Air National Guard is a finalist for stationing nearly 20 F-35 Joint Strike Fighters. This is the military's next generation aircraft and the Jacksonville Air National Guard was selected as a finalist after more than 200 Air Force sites were reviewed. The Secretary of the Air Force approved Jacksonville based on a variety of criteria including available airspace, airport operations, and the surrounding community.

Jacksonville is a natural and strong candidate for a number of reasons. We have the military assets, and we have qualified people and a supportive community that welcomes the military investment. This is a promising and positive development for Jacksonville. In addition to underscoring our region's military strengths, bringing the Joint Strike Fighter to Jacksonville will create jobs.

The Air Force is expected to announce a final decision in early 2011.

## CASEWORK CORNER

One of my primary goals is to make sure Floridians are well served by Federal agencies. From time to time, I will share accounts of how our office has helped a Floridian.

One of my constituents is a disabled woman who spent several months trying to obtain a \$250 stimulus payment from her local Social Security office. Unable to resolve the matter on her own, she contacted our office for assistance.

We contacted the Social Security Administration and were informed there was an outstanding request for the constituent's Naturalization certificate to confirm eligibility. An appointment was arranged for her to present the required document. Within four weeks she received her stimulus payment.

*If you are experiencing a problem with a federal agency, please contact our Orlando Regional Office by calling (407) 254-2573 to speak with a member of the Casework Department. The toll-free number for Florida residents is (866) 630-7106. To find out more about how my office can help you, go to <http://LeMieux.Senate.gov> or stop by one of our scheduled Community Office Hours in your area.*